

Gardiner still hopeful ferry overhauling can be moved from Seattle to Southeast

By HARRY GAMBLE
Daily News Staff Writer

JUNEAU—Following an inspection of facilities used for repair and annual maintenance of state ferries in Seattle, Rep. Terry Gardiner is still hopeful the work could be transferred to the 49th State.

Although Gardiner will not request a specific Southeast Alaska locale in any bill, he says, "Ketchikan may be the logical place to put it, because most of the ferry workers live there."

The state's First City also has a larger pool of skilled marine laborers than any other southeastern community, he says.

But a proposed feasibility study, which Gardiner says may cost between \$30,000 and \$50,000, will determine the spot where a repair terminal may be placed.

The marine transportation division currently calls for bids for repair and annual maintenance work. Lockheed Shipbuilding and Todd's shipyard in Seattle, according to Gardiner, are the only firms which have won bids for the work.

Each firm has three dry docks, and two of each company's drydocks are leased from the federal government. Todd's employs up to 3,000 personnel and currently there are about 2,000 on duty. Sixty per cent

of the workers' time is devoted to new vessel construction, Gardiner said.

Gardiner explained how annual maintenance is performed on the ferries. The boats spend from three to five days in drydock for bottom work, then they are transferred to the state's ferry terminal at Pier 48 for six weeks of other maintenance.

One third of the per vessel repair cost, which can cost up to \$100,000, is accumulated during the short time the boats are in drydock.

Each of the Seattle drydocks cost about \$20 million to build, but Gardiner says, "I don't know if we'd need one like that."

But the important question, beyond the initial cost of the docks, is "how much money goes to Seattle in wages that can go to Southeastern," he said.

Todd's shipyard "didn't feel we had the labor pool available."

William Bendixen, state marine supervisor, told Gardiner the ferries would need added and more costly care as they grow older and the work could be more easily done in Seattle.

"When we started the ferry system . . . there weren't any skilled persons to man the vessels," Gardiner said.

Juneau Empire

Contract Let For Alaska Ferry

A \$7.5 million contract for construction of another ferry has been awarded to Peterson Builders of Sturgeon Bay, Wis. by Alaska Marine Highway System. It will be similar to the *LeConte* delivered by the same firm last year.

The 235-foot addition to the growing Alaska fleet will shuttle passengers between Ketchikan, Metlakatala and Hollis. It is scheduled for completion in May, 1977.

Ferry repair dock asked for city

By HARRY GAMBLE
Daily News Staff Writer

A 15-member delegation of Ketchikan chamber, city and borough officials outlined to state officials in Juneau Wednesday a proposal to improve the city's waterfront. The delegates also asked state participation by establishing a ferry repair facility in the waterfront area.

Meeting with the Ketchikan delegation were Commissioner of Public Works Don Harris, ferry department director William Hudson and waters and harbors division director Don Statter. The Ketchikan delegation was bolstered by Kent Miller, a marine development consultant hired by the waterfront development advisory committee in Ketchikan.

The city has extensive plans on the drawing board to purchase the Alaska Steam dock and Ketchikan Cold Storage property and convert it into a multipurpose marine facility, funded by the state and city. The state will provide up to \$1.5 million from a port development bond program. The city provides 20 per cent local participation.

The plans include a repair dock for the Alaska ferry system. Other uses would include cruise ship and small boat berthing.

Teague asked whether the state should be notified that the city intends to utilize the state government's share of the port development monies so the funds won't be diverted to other ports.

Statter replied, "If it took a year to get your project together, those funds are there." But, he added that the \$1.5 million would have to be used for port development facilities. Statter specifically singled out a high-rise hotel on the property as a non-marine use.

Teague said he had received an overture for a high-rise there but he did not pursue the subject.

Statter called the port project "great" and said his department would provide needed design assistance to cut costs.

Bonds will provide the city's share of the money, Teague said, and Statter said the state could transfer the state's share to local coffers after the project is approved by his department.

In event the city bond issue does not pass, he said his office would need an official indication of alternate funding. He added, "I can't see the project failing with the multipurpose concept" because it would benefit the "broad spectrum of the voting public."

The harbor facilities would be totally a city-run project without state interference.

Statter also said an expansion project at Bar Harbor "is almost assured, it's just a matter of time." He did not offer a target date.

About the installation of a breakwater facility at Knudson Cove, he said: "We'd like to do it, but the problem with it is that it hasn't had a priority."

Push for Ferries

Councilman Monte Guymon and consultant Miller coupled efforts in an attempt to persuade commissioner Harris and Hudson to establish a ferry repair facility in Ketchikan.

A bill introduced by Rep. Terry Gardiner, D-Ketchikan, which passed the house and currently is in the senate provides \$50,000 for a feasibility study to determine whether Ketchikan is a good alternative to Seattle for some of the ferry maintenance work.

However, the Ketchikan delegation suggested a simultaneous pilot project be conducted in Ketchikan this winter with several vessels, in addition to the feasibility study. According to the proposal, the city could provide 525 feet of berthage and 10,000 square feet of warehouse space to accommodate the pilot program.

The proposed facility could house the Matanuska or Taku plus the Chilkat, the Bartlett or the Le Conte, and could service all five vessels this winter, city officials say.

Miller cited mild Ketchikan weather, ample marine service and supply businesses, and cost reduction by housing crew members in Ketchikan as plus signs for the First City facility.

Guymon admitted that the facility could not completely replace Seattle dry docks, "although it seems possible that it (Ketchikan) could support a repair station consisting of machine, electrical, welding, carpentry, paint and engine shops and a warehouse for spare parts."

Commissioner Harris asked for a list of marine related facilities.

Hudson said, "We have to be very cautious in experimenting with a limited budget. A full study is absolutely necessary."

Hudson, who recognized the value of keeping Alaska dollars in Alaska "if it is a viable system," stated "perhaps the Alaska facility, quite seriously has some real backbone."

Expansion Blocked

In other ferry system developments, the marine transportation division is concerned about acquisition by the postal service of property the ferry system now says it needs for future expansion of its Ketchikan facilities.

"I am of the opinion that we cannot expand without access to the property for which the postal service paid almost \$500,000," Hudson said.

The ferry system could not buy the property under the current budget. "We don't have the money to do anything different than we've done...we didn't foresee the problem."

"Perhaps the only way we could expand has been blocked off at the pass," Hudson said.

Marine transportation and highway department officials said that they would need to determine a course of action. "The first thing," a highway official said, "is to get the post office turned off."

With a projected summer 1977 completion date for the Le Conte class ferry to begin its Prince of Wales and Metlakatla run from

Ketchikan, and perhaps a run from the First City to Prince Rupert, the ferry system is faced with the problem of berthing the new ship.

The borough now utilizes state facilities for its two airport ferries, the Abnaki and Algonquin, and they could present a problem when the Le Conte II replaces the Chilkat. The borough ferries and the Chilkat share the same landing ramp.

Emphasizing that plans have not been made yet for the Le Conte II berth, Hudson said the borough could be faced with locating its own ramp area for the airport ferries.

Statter said the Chilkat berth was not built for permanency as the dolphins were installed intentionally to be easily removed. "Where the Abnaki goes, that's beyond me," Statter said.

Troubles in Rupert

The ferry system also has trouble at its only British Columbia dock in Prince Rupert.

In September 1974, the Alaska ferry system was forced to place a mobile ticket booth outside the B. C. ferries ticket office when the Canadians declined to further handle that part of the Alaska operation.

"Now the B. C. ferries want full use of the dock and we won't do that because the Alaska ferries would have to restructure their schedule," Hudson said.

The size of the property the Alaska ferries utilize could be trimmed and Hudson said that would put a squeeze on development.

As a result, customs facilities may have to be transferred from Prince Rupert to another port, possible to Ketchikan.

But, he added, "I think I have caused enough of a stir (in B. C.)...to come up with a solution."

In addition, Hudson has made a trip to Bellingham, Wash., to determine whether to base the southbound turnaround there. With Bellingham over 100 miles closer to Alaska, "there is no reason Bellingham would not be more economical to our operation."

State To Close Downtown Terminal?

By JOHN RUHL
Empire Staff Reporter

Juneau's era as the only Southeastern Alaskan city with two ferry docks may be near its end.

State ferry system officials are considering dropping the Juneau City Dock from the Marine Highway System's main route, and setting up a central ferry terminal complex and ferry system headquarters at the Auke Bay terminal.

William Hudson, recently appointed director of the Division of Marine Transportation, told the Empire that efficiency is the division's prime concern.

"The ferry system is tremendously expensive and something has to be done about it," Hudson said. He said the division has been conducting a top-to-bottom survey of the ferry system in the last several months.

Gastineau Channel is a relative backwater along the marine highway, he said, and it takes about an hour's running time each way for ferries to digress up the channel to the city dock. For fuel and crew salaries it costs almost \$11 per minute to operate a mid-sized ferry such as the Matanuska. The larger ferries cost substantially more to run, Hudson said.

At \$11 per minute it costs more than \$1,300 for the two-hour run into Gastineau Channel. There will be 42 ferry arrivals at the Juneau dock in July 1975 alone, according to the latest Alaska Marine Highway schedule.

Hudson said Juneau's growing ferry traffic demands that ferry facilities will have to be improved and enlarged soon—either at the city dock or at the Auke Bay terminal. It would be financially impractical, if

He said the downtown area should not suffer much from the loss of the ferry service. Under present ferry schedules few of the boats arrive at the city dock during business hours, he said, and those who do have such short layovers that the city merchants probably would lose little business from passengers passing through to other ports. Furthermore, the move to Auke Bay would free the city dock to be used exclusively by summer cruise ships, which in the past have been crowded out into the harbor whenever ferries needed the dock.

Officials from the City and Borough of Juneau and the Greater Juneau Chamber of Commerce are apparently not so sure how the city would fare in such a move.

Mar Winegar, city-borough manager, said the City-Borough Assembly knows about the Marine Transportation Division's study, but has taken no official stand yet. He said the "historic position is that the assembly advocated having ferry service to the city dock." That position has stood since the early 1960's.

The Greater Juneau Chamber of Commerce, like the assembly, has taken no official position regarding the possible ferry move. R. A. "Dutch" Derr, executive vice president of the chamber, said a committee is studying the possible gains and losses to the city if the ferry service were moved from downtown.

Officials at Foss Alaska Lines say they are opposed to moving ferry terminal facilities to Auke Bay.

"I can understand why the ferry system people

not impossible, he said, to expand the staging area at the city terminal.

Geographically the city dock is too cramped between the water, the mountain and private properties to allow for a much larger staging area, he said. Vehicles waiting for the ferry in the summer sometimes pile up in lines a half mile up and down Franklin Street and Thane Road.

At Auke Bay the state owns virtually all the land around the terminal. Hudson said the area on the townward side of the Auke Bay dock could be filled in and the area on the landward side of Glacier Highway possibly could be excavated to provide whatever level area is needed.

Another problem with Juneau's ferry situation is that its administrative and supply offices are strung out over the city instead of being next to the ferry terminals, Hudson said.

"There's no question that Juneau should be the headquarters for the whole marine highway system," he said. "But I feel it is inefficient to have in community four major installations so spread apart: the two ferry terminal complexes, the storehouse at the support and the main offices downtown."

Hudson said it was not known at this time how much it would cost or exactly when the state would be able to begin moving its facilities entirely to Auke Bay. He did say, however, that the fiscal 1975-76 marine transportation budget includes a request for funds to build a sanitary sewage treatment plant and water supply tanks to service the ferries now putting in at that terminal.

would want to move out to Auke Bay, from their operational standpoint," Hank Noble, Foss manager for the Juneau area, said, "but it's a question of how much fuel the ferries will save versus the extra fuel and time the people and trucking companies in Juneau will have to spend to get out to Auke Bay."

He said Foss drivers can load their cargoes of 24-foot vans in an average of one hour when the ferries dock downtown, but that it would take at least eight hours to do the same job if drivers had to pull the vans to Auke Bay. He said the biggest cost increases would be paid by residents of Haines and Skagway who receive about 16 vanloads per week by ferry. He said the Foss Co. in Seattle is studying to determine exactly how much extra it would cost in extra fuel, labor and tariffs.

Noble said Foss has no plans at present to move its headquarters out to Auke Bay.

"We have over \$1 million invested in our Juneau facilities," he said. "Our obligations in the Juneau area are too great."

Noble said that the Foss Co. has its warehouse adjacent to the city dock up for ease and that it could negotiate with the state for the ease. The warehouse with few modifications could be used for an extra staging area, he said.

Noble suggested that the shipping problem could be lessened considerably if the ferries would put in at Juneau at least occasionally.

"We would like to see the ferries stop in Juneau at least once a week, northbound and southbound," he said.

ALASKA MARINE HIGHWAY

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Panel Suggests Ferry To Cross Alaska Gulf

Times Juneau Bureau

JUNEAU — A \$40 million proposal to link Southeastern and Southcentral Alaska via the ferry system was introduced in the state House of Representatives yesterday by its State Affairs Committee.

State Affairs Chairman Bill Parker, D-Anchorage is

predicting Alaska voters will go along with the proposal. If the bill passes the legislature, the \$40 million bond issue will go before voters in the next general election.

The proposal, Parker said, "gives them (the voters) a chance to see if they want to tie into the ferry system. I think they will."

Three-fourths of the money, \$30 million, would be spent on an ocean-going vessel at least 450 feet long.

Five million dollars would be spent on lengthening by 44 feet the ferry Bartlett, which runs between Seward and Cordova, with \$3 million in the bond issue going to upgrade docks and terminals at Seward, Cordova and Valdez. Yakutat, not now served by any ferries, would get a \$2 million dock and terminal.

Southcentral residents now have ferry service between Seward and Cordova and between Homer and Kodiak, but none linking with Southeastern. Southcentral residents must drive to Haines to board the Southeastern system which extends to Seattle.

Aleutian ferry system asked

JUNEAU, Alaska (AP) — A \$25 million expansion of the state ferry system into the Alaska Peninsula and Aleutian Islands was offered in a package of legislation Friday.

Rep. Alvin Osterback, D-Sand Point, said the general obligation bond requiring approval of voters next year would fund construction of a Tustumena-class ferry and docking facilities at 10 communities.

In a companion resolution, Osterback called on the Division of Marine Transportation to conduct a study of the plan and hold hearings on the peninsula and chain.

The Democrat said freight service to the area now is expensive and undependable, in part because the Summit, a carrier hired by the U.S. Navy to serve Adak, often hits water too rough to navigate.

Ports would be built at Chignik, Sand Point, Squaw Harbor, King Cove, Cold Bay, False Pass, Ivanoff Bay, Akutan, Dutch Harbor and Unalaska.

Two Ferries Will Winter In Alaska

By SUSAN GILMORE
Empire Staff Reporter

In what he termed a "gamble" and "a first for Alaska" the director of the state ferry system says two ferries will be assigned to Ketchikan for this year's annual winter maintenance lay-up.

Marine Transportation Director Bill Hudson said the LeConte and the Chilkat will be tended by an Alaskan crew in an Alaskan port in an experimental move by the ferry system.

Ferries are usually tied up in Seattle for winter maintenance. He said Ketchikan requested the ferries and offered free docking space which, following investigation, proved to be adequate for the minor winter repairs the two ferries will need.

Hudson said representatives from Juneau also approached him hoping to have the ferries berthed here, but this request was found to be unfeasible—at least for this year.

"Sen. Bill Ray approached me about a month ago asking that I investigate the feasibility of leaving (the LeConte) in Juneau," Hudson said. "But the problem is dock space, shore power and the safety of the vessel."

Although the city may be willing to offer the state the use of the Alaska Steamship dock, Hudson said this facility would be inadequate for winter maintenance work.

Of primary concern is the lack of shore power at the dock—a separate source of electricity which can be cabled in to replace the ship's generators when the engines are broken down for repair. "We need shore power because we have to tear the ship down and take out the engine," Hudson said, "and we'll need another power source for heating, ventilation, etc." He said the installation of such a power source would cost about \$50,000.

Hudson said he would also be concerned about the safety of the ship if it was moored at the Alaska Steamship Dock, particularly during blustery Taku winds.

"With these winds we could end up with the loss of a vessel," Hudson said, "and that's not a gamble I'm willing to take."

Hudson did say, though, that long-term plans call for the construction of a second ferry terminal at Auke Bay equipped with shore power adequate for winter maintenance work.

The decision to dock the ferries in Ketchikan apparently pre-empts a resolution pending before the Juneau City-Borough Assembly which offers free use of the Alaska Steamship Dock for this winter's maintenance.

The resolution was drafted in late August by the city-borough port commission, eyeing both the economic benefit to Juneau and the convenience for the crew, most of whom live in the capital city.

"We felt that since the crew of the LeConte principally lives in Juneau, rather than lay it up in Ketchikan or Seattle it would be a decent gesture by the city to offer (the steamship dock) free of charge," said commission chairman Tom Bergstrom.

"Juneau would like to do the maintenance work and is capable of doing it," Bergstrom said, "and the dock is empty in the winter so there is no reason it can't be used for winter tie-up."

The decision to award the maintenance contract to Ketchikan apparently was made before Juneau's overtures to the state ferry office.

"Ketchikan has an equipped dock and has offered free space on a trial basis," Hudson said. "This has never been done before in Alaska—but we favor doing work we can in state."

Tentative plans call for the ferries to dry dock in Seattle for about three weeks and then return to Ketchikan for the maintenance work.

Hudson said the ferries must go to Seattle to be pulled out of the water for underwater inspection and hull painting—work Alaskan facilities are not equipped to perform. The ferries, though, will then be turned over to their crew and local Ketchikan contractors for work including engine overhauling and interior painting—probably a two-month job.

"Actually we're taking a gamble on this," Hudson said. "There are no special funds appropriated for this experiment and no funds to cover mistakes Marine Transportation might make (in letting Ketchikan do the work). These two ferries are the smallest and require the least maintenance so it is the least gamble," he said.

Angoon Due Ferry Project

The Department of Highways announced today that it will begin advertising for bids to construct Project RS-0998 (1), Ferry Terminal Facilities at Angoon.

The project will consist of construction of a ferry terminal and an approach road near Angoon, Alaska.

All work is scheduled for completion in 150 Calendar Days. Advertising will begin March 31, 1976

ALASKA MARINE HIGHWAY

- 50th ANNIVERSARY -



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STURGEON BAY, WIS. 54235

PRICE 15¢

TUESDAY, MAY 4, 1976



Peterson Builders launched a 235-ft. ferry for the state of Alaska Saturday morning. It is the second such ferry

to be constructed at PBI in recent years and the third Alaska ferry to come out of Sturgeon Bay. —Harmann

It's A Dog's Life, Says Ferry Crew

Jack, a three-year-old Airedale, was glad to get back to the warm confines of his kennel recently, after spending nearly an hour in the icy waters just south of Ketchikan.

The dog, owned by Dan Fruits of Albany, Indiana, was riding in a kennel in his master's truck aboard the Malaspina enroute to Seattle. He apparently tired of the restrictive quarters and began to gnaw his way out. Once he had freed himself, Jack went looking for some fresh air and found a tie hole in the rear of the ship.

The dog apparently fell through the tie hole

into the water and began swimming toward land. Crewmember Kim Peabody, scanning the waters with binoculars, spotted him and informed Captain Cecil H. Rice.

Rice immediately ordered the ship's course altered 180 degrees and the Malaspina went into a "Williamson turn."

When the Malaspina drew to within about 300 yards of the Airedale, Chief Mate Thomas Aspinwall and two other crewmen were lowered from the ship in a lifeboat. They plucked Jack from the chilly waters and returned him to his owner.

New Food Service Nets State Profit

Special to The Times

JUNEAU — The MV Malaspina continues to net the state a profit in her food and passenger service categories, Commissioner of Public Works Don Harris reports.

The vessel showed a profit of \$20,000 after expenses for June compared to a loss of \$44,000 during the same month last year.

This improvement can be attributed almost directly to the conversion of the Malaspina last winter to fast food service. The conversion to this type of food service, which met with such controversy last legislative session, is the prime reason for our more efficient operation, Harris said.

In the two months of operation

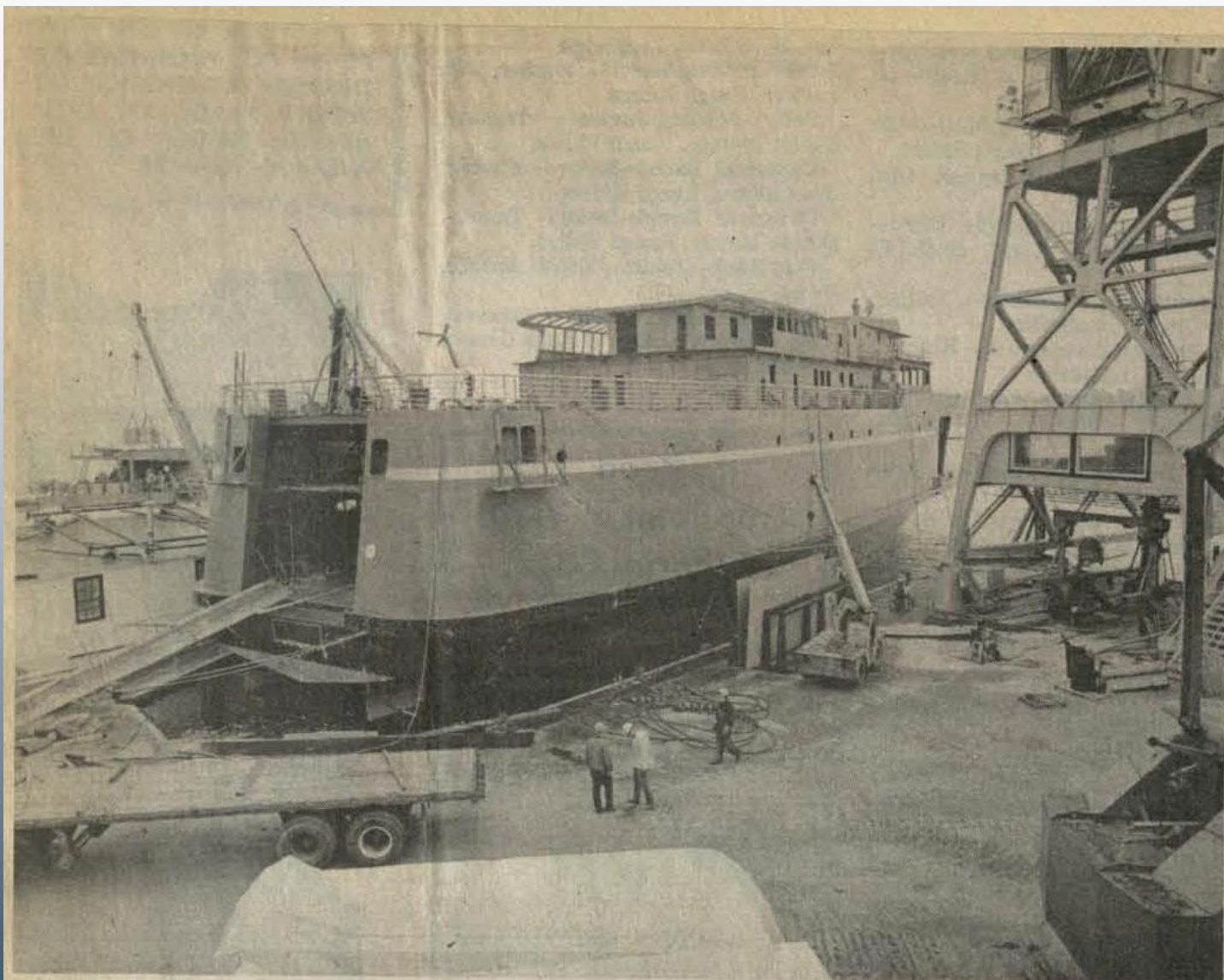
since the conversion the Malaspina has been chalking up an increasingly profitable profile.

Harris said the \$400,000 spent to convert the Malaspina has, in two months, returned to the state an adjusted profit of over \$160,000 although passenger traffic on the Malaspina is down 10 per cent for May and June of this year as compared to last year.

The division of marine transportation is continuing to monitor the system and is conducting onboard a users survey of the passengers traveling on the Malaspina. Initial response remains favorable.

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A 235-ft. ferry for the state of Alaska is under construction at Peterson Builders. She is a twin sister to the previously delivered LeConte. The yard is scheduling

the vessel for late fall delivery although the contract does not call for delivery until the late spring of next year.

—Harmann

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Computerized Format May Improve Ferry System

The Alaska ferry system may operate with a more efficient ticketing process by next summer if plans to convert ticketing to a computerized format work out.

Bill Hudson, director of the division of marine transportation, said yesterday that Gov. Jay Hammond has approved a request for \$450,000 for the program.

"We're shooting for early January 1977," Hudson said. "That period is critical if we are to have it (the computer system) to handle what we think will be a tremendous summer next year."

In the past, the manual method of handling reservations was sufficient because of lesser traffic demands, Hudson said. But last year the ferry system transported about 270,000 people and 60,000 vehicles and projections indicate an even larger demand this year and next.

Although a study conducted a year ago indicated that the ferry system was not yet ready for computerized reservations, Hudson said he thinks the division is now ready for the more sophisticated system.

"As director I've received many comments from people who've had a difficult time making and confirming reservations," he said. At present, a

person wishing to make a reservation in Anchorage for ferry service from Haines to Seattle must wait while the request is relayed to Juneau, where it has to be checked through the manual system there, then called back to Anchorage before the reservation can be confirmed.

"With our old volumes (of traffic) this didn't present so much of a problem," Hudson said. "But with the higher number of people wanting reservations it's just too cumbersome."

Though the new system has not been approved finally, the Department of Public Works

has sought bids for providing it. Hudson said that at last count at least five interested parties had responded to the bid requests.

"The new system might be operated through a computer of our own or through a leasing system where we would use a computer belonging to someone else," Hudson said. With it, ticketing personnel at any of the system's 17 terminals could "instantaneously get complete details" about passenger or vehicle space availability on a particular ferry trip.

Exactly how much the system will cost won't be

known until the bids are tabulated, but "a ballpark figure might be anywhere from \$300,000 for initial acquisition to \$400,000 to \$450,000 a year" thereafter, Hudson said. The ferry system could save possibly as much as \$100,000 to \$200,000 a year by eliminating many of the mostly temporary employees now required in the Juneau office to maintain the current reservations system, as well as reducing the number of no-shows at the dock.

The proposed computerized system, "almost identical to the airlines system," would be "a tremendous improvement

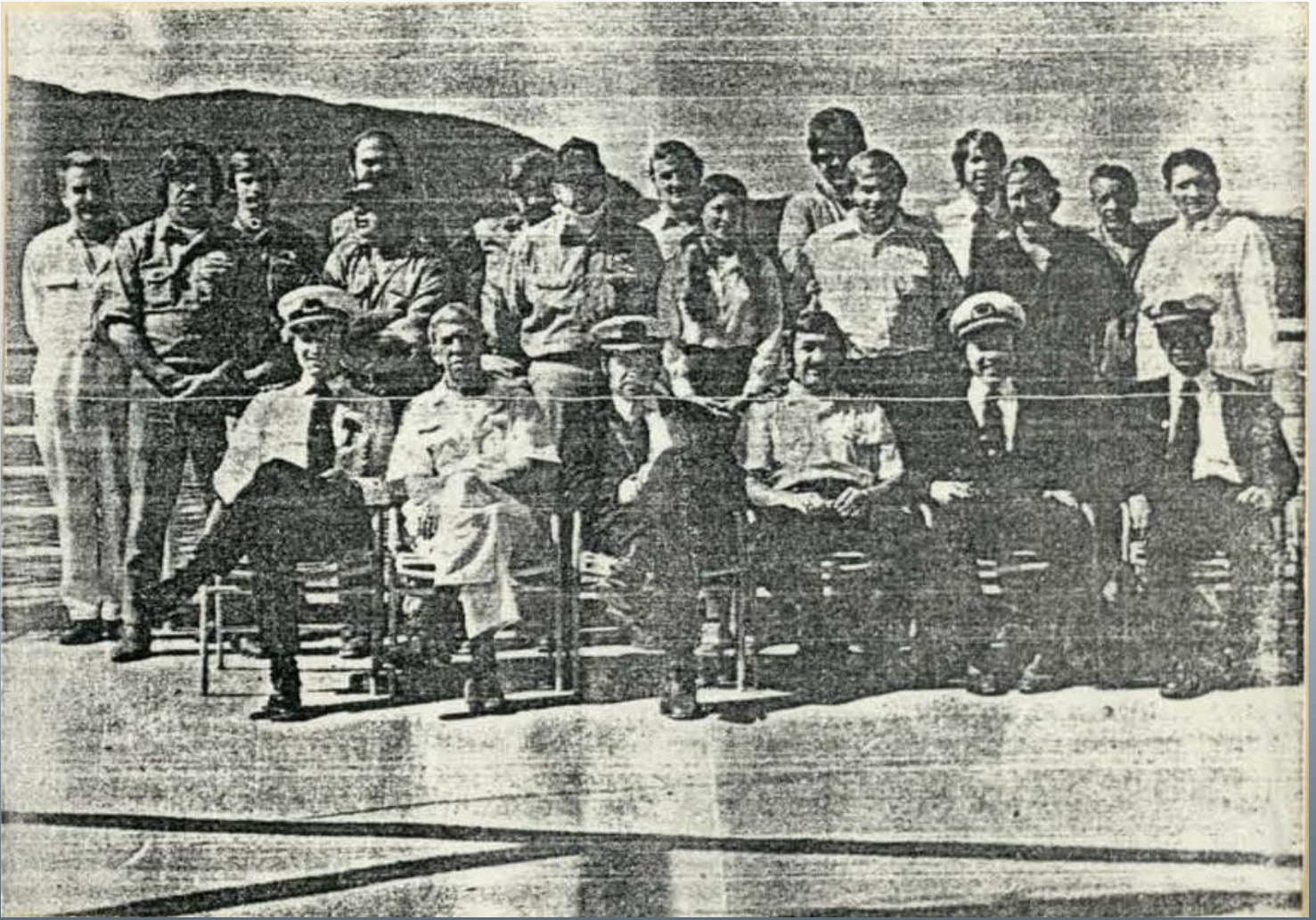
in public service," Hudson said. "We know it would be more efficient, and allow us to more fully utilize our whole

traffic system."

"The final cost will be the lowest priced system we can come up with," he said.

ALASKA MARINE HIGHWAY

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VOYAGE NO. 1,000—The summer crew of the Bartlett. Left to right, back row: Arthur E. Mack, first assistant engineer; Bill Cronin, bo'sun; John Stables, deck watchman; J. Wayne Johnson, seaman; Jerry Manley, seaman; Brian Spurling, chief cook; Bryan Lewis, steward; and Cline Reese, oiler. Second row, left to right: Don Peterson, seaman; Chambers, seaman; W.D. Little, seaman; Janice Baron, steward; Robert Crachino, second assistant cook; Wes Cade, oiler; Norbert Knudel, steward. Front row, left to right. Capt. Ronald D. Hamrick, master; J.D. Krepps, chief engineer; Bill Stidd, chief purser; Michael G. Anderson, chief steward; James M. Soucie, chief mate; Edward Barnes, second mate. The crew is decreased by seven in the winter months.

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PELICAN-BOUND—The state ferry LeConte will begin regular service to the small fishing village of Pelican on Chichagof Island Monday. A special cruise with dignitaries including Bella Hammond aboard will leave from Auke Bay Monday for the round-trip via Hoonah. Beginning in December, the LeConte will sail to Pelican the first Monday

of every month. The state agreed to include the town as a regular port-of-call after Pelican citizens funded the construction of a city dock. The town will host a reception when the ferry docks in Pelican Monday to celebrate its addition to the LeConte's itinerary.

✓ Another slice of Alaska frontier life vanished forever as the gleaming state ferry LeConte linked the boardwalk fishing village of Pelican deep in the misty Alexander Archipelago, with mainland civilization.

For some, the 200-mile maiden, round trip voyage of the MV LeConte from Juneau on the Southeast Alaska coast to Pelican on Chichagof Island was a cause for celebration.

"You can't stop progress, even in Pelican," beamed Big Rosey, the hefty saloon-keeper ad hoc banker and mother figure to the 200-odd men, women and children who make their home in this 40-year-old cannery town. "We've got it made now."

ALASKA MARINE HIGHWAY

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MAIDEN VOYAGE—The state ferry LeConte steamed into the tiny fishing village of Pelican Monday, linking the community with other towns on the ferry's panhandle route.

Despite chilly, drizzly weather nearly the whole town turned out to greet the ferry.

Pelican—Hooked Up With The Rest Of Southeastern

By SUSAN GILMORE
Empire Staff Reporter

PELICAN—As the LeConte rocked and pitched through the stormy seas of Cross Sound, those of us on board wondered if it was worth all the effort. An hour later, sailing through calm Lisianski Inlet toward the small fishing village of Pelican, queasy stomachs had quieted and spirits had lifted.

The small group of passengers on the LeConte, including an official party of dignitaries and an unofficial delegation of bar owners from Juneau, squeezed to the front of the ship to wave to Pelicanites who played hokey from school and work to greet the ferry and argue over who would tie the ferry up.

The occasion was Monday's inaugural once-a-month voyage of the LeConte to Pelican, a small cannery town some 75 miles southwest of Juneau on Chichagof Island. For most of the residents the LeConte's arrival was cause for wild celebration. Others, however, viewed the ferry as an unwelcome intruder into the peaceful life of the village.

"I think it's great," beamed Rosey, the hefty bar-owner who spread a feast of king crab in honor of the occasion. "You can't stop progress, even in Pelican."

"It's the ugliest thing I've ever seen," countered Pelican's 25-year-old mayor Bruce Anderson. "A lot of people didn't want to see the ferry here," he said. "It's fear of the future. Many feel its the first step in the wrong direction."

A carpenter by trade, Anderson said he moved to Pelican four years ago from Bellingham, Wash. hoping to avoid the civilization he sees the ferry spawning.

The ferry dock, a four-year effort by Pelicanites, cost \$360,000. Of that total, \$17,000 was footed by tax revenues from the town's 160 residents.

The major push behind the construction of the dock and subsequent pledge by Alaska Marine Transportation officials to include the town on its itinerary, was the need for low-cost transportation. Previously all supplies came into town on the Pelican Cold Storage's barge and all passengers came in by air.

But now some residents are concerned that freight charges will remain high as vans must be rented to haul freight on and off the ferry. While Anderson said he objected to the high price charged by the cold storage, he said he'd "rather pay the price than see the town grow."

For passengers who can afford the month layover, a roundtrip ticket to Pelican on the

LeConte costs \$24. A roundtrip airline ticket via Eagle Air costs \$64.

Even those who objected to the ferry joined in the celebration Monday. Streamers hung from the ceiling of John and Marion's Bar and Grill welcoming the 60-some passengers from the LeConte. Bella Hammond, wife of Gov. Jay Hammond, headed a list of dignitaries which also included Marine Transportation director Bill Hudson.

Rosey, bubbling with exuberance, passed out balloons and bumper stickers that blared, "Move the Capital to Pelican." Bill Macomber, Juneau's colorful ex-mayor, was one of the first off the ferry in his circus callopie, blowing its siren as he drove it up Pelican's boardwalk.

A reception was held in the town's new high school, built on stilts near the ferry dock. Schools closed early for the occasion, and youngsters raced to the dock to watch the arrival. "I like the ferry," said one, "because someday I may want to leave Pelican."

Things were quieter at the other end of the boardwalk near the cold storage dock. An old resident, tending his fishing boat, squinted at

the bright lights twinkling on the LeConte.

"You know, there's more lights on that ferry than in the whole town," said "Oso" Pete, an 81-year-old fisherman from Norway who arrived in the area before the town did.

"I emigrated from Norway in 1911," he reminisced with a trace of a Norwegian accent, "and I haven't been back since." He said he sailed around the world and Pelican is where he ended up.

Unlike many of Pelican's oldtimers, he didn't view the LeConte's arrival as an intrusion. "It's what the people wanted," he said.

Because it was a special occasion, the LeConte stayed in Pelican for four hours; on its regular schedule the first Monday of each month the ferry will stay only long enough to load and unload.

The ferry was heavier when it left Pelican Monday evening. On board was a big fork lift bound for Seattle for repairs and a large contingent from Pelican who carried the party from Rosey's to the LeConte's bar.

Rosey was on board too. After partying all night on the vessel, she planned to fly back to Pelican today.



ROSEY'S TREAT—Rosey, the vociferous owner of one of Pelican's most famous bars, greeted the arrival of the state ferry LeConte on her small motor bike. After the ferry docked, she was embraced by several Juneau bar owners who travelled to Pelican to join the celebration.

Pelican gets ferry service

JUNEAU, Alaska (AP) — The state marine highway system will begin regular ferry service to the tiny fishing village of Pelican next week, Gov. Jay Hammond has announced.

Beginning Nov. 8, the MV LeConte will sail from Auke Bay to Pelican the first Monday of every month with an intermediate stop at Hoonah, Hammond said.

The state agreed to include the town as a regular port-of-call after Pelican citizens funded the construction of a city dock.

behind a project," Hammond said.

Pelican is located on Chichagof Island about 80 miles southwest of Juneau.

LeConte brings civilization to Pelican

'You can't stop progress'

Ferry ends Pelican's isolation

Progress, Ferry System Arrive at Tiny Pelican

By G. MICHAEL HARMON
Associated Press Writer

PELICAN, Alaska (AP)—Another slice of Alaska frontier life vanished forever in the pre-dawn darkness Tuesday as the gleaming state ferry LeConte linked this boardwalk fishing village deep in the misty Alexander Archipelago with mainland civilization.

For some, the 200-mile maiden, round trip voyage of the MV LeConte from Juneau on the Southeast Alaska coast to Pelican on Chichagof Island was a cause for celebration.

"You can't stop progress, even in Pelican," beamed Big Rosey, the hefty saloon-keeper, ad hoc banker and mother figure to the 200-odd men, women and children who make their home in this 40-year-old cannery town. "We've got it made now."

For others, however, the first of a once-a-month appearance by the 250-passenger auto ferry represented the untimely end to a disappearing Alaska lifestyle. "That ferry is the ugliest thing I've ever seen come in here," growled Pelican's 25-year-old Mayor, Bruce Anderson, as the LeConte tied up at the town's new \$360,000 dock.

"A lot of people like myself came here to escape from civilization, but a majority of the people want it."

The majority prevailed because of the unquestionable need for low-cost transportation and freight service to the town where previously all supplies must come in by barge and all passengers by airplane.

Before the ferry, Pelican residents had to pay up to \$160 to charter a plane to or from Juneau. And it cost Rosey nearly \$100 a case to bring in beer.

In contrast, a passenger ticket on the LeConte, the smallest of six state ferries which ply between a dozen towns on Alaska's Inland Passage, is \$12 one-way. The bill for the first freight load out of Pelican, a big fork lift bound for Seattle for repairs, was less than \$300.

Bella Hammond, the wife of Gov. Jay Hammond, headed a party of dignitaries among the approximately 70 passengers who made the inaugural 16-hour, round trip voyage, which was marred by an out-

break of sea sickness as the LeConte rolled through 12-foot seas while steaming near an open passage to the stormy Gulf of Alaska.

"Everything would have been okay I think if I hadn't eaten the poached salmon for lunch," said one female passenger as she emerged pale and shaken from a crowded restroom.

Sharing the limelight with Mrs. Hammond's official party, was an unofficial delegation of Juneau bar owners and their friends, who spent the entire round trip ensconced in the LeConte's lounge.

"We may not break even in fares to and from Pelican, but we'll probably make up for any losses in the bar," said one LeConte crew member.

Pelican Due Ferry Service

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"The initiation of ferry service to Pelican exemplifies both the importance of the marine highway to residents of Southeast Alaska and the progress that can be made when a community gets behind a project," Hammond said.

Pelican is located on Chichagof Island about 80 miles southwest of Juneau.

State ferry to serve Pelican

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Ferry service for Pelican village

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Pelican linked to the world

Ferry Ends Frontier Isolation

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Hammond Announces Switch In Ferry Reservation System

Governor Jay Hammond has announced a contract has been awarded to begin the conversion of the Alaska Marine Highway's reservation system from a manual to a computerized operation. The three-phase, \$100,000 contract for the RMS (Reservation Management System) was awarded to Systems Northwest, Inc. of Juneau.

The first phase of the contract, which is already underway, is to analyze present reservation procedures, and the administrative practices affecting them. Based on this analysis, formal recommendations for change and improvement will be made, culminating with a basic systems design.

The second phase will be the detailed design and programming of the computerized reservation system, along with the development and implementation of supporting manual

procedures.

The third phase will be the actual installation of the system. Plans call for initial use to be provided to Juneau, Seattle and Anchorage stations via computer terminals and communications lines. Then the system will be extended to remaining ferry terminals and reservation locations as demand arises.

The Governor said, "This new Reservation Management System will be comparable to those used by major airlines, only it will be adapted to the special needs of our Marine Highway. This system will be an important aid to Alaskans who travel the Marine Highway in Southeast Alaska, Prince William Sound, the Cook Inlet area, and Kodiak, and to our tourist industry overall since it will provide faster and highly reliable service to consumers."

Metlakatla to get Chilkat full time

By RICHARD FOLEY

Daily News Staff Writer

JUNEAU—The division of marine transportation has said it will alter the summer runs of the Alaska ferry Chilkat to provide "day boat" service to Ketchikan from Metlakatla. The ferry will be home ported in Metlakatla.

During a meeting of the house ferry oversight committee, Monday, director of marine transportation William Hudson said the service will begin in early June when the new 235-foot ferry Aurora goes on line. The scheduling changes will provide one trip to and from Ketchikan daily. Hudson said it would cost about half as much as it does now to operate the Chilkat on the new schedule.

Originally the Aurora was supposed to provide service to Metlakatla, and to Clark Bay on Prince of Wales Island from Ketchikan. However, inadequate state docking facilities at Metlakatla could not be altered to accept the new ferry as soon as previously planned.

Hudson said it currently costs about \$500,000 a year to operate the Chilkat on its regular schedule. With annual revenues of about \$130,000, yearly subsidy for the Chilkat is over \$370,000. The operating budget for the Chilkat under the new daily service is about \$250,000 with expected revenue of almost \$125,000.

Hudson said contracts with the Inland Boatmen's Union, had to

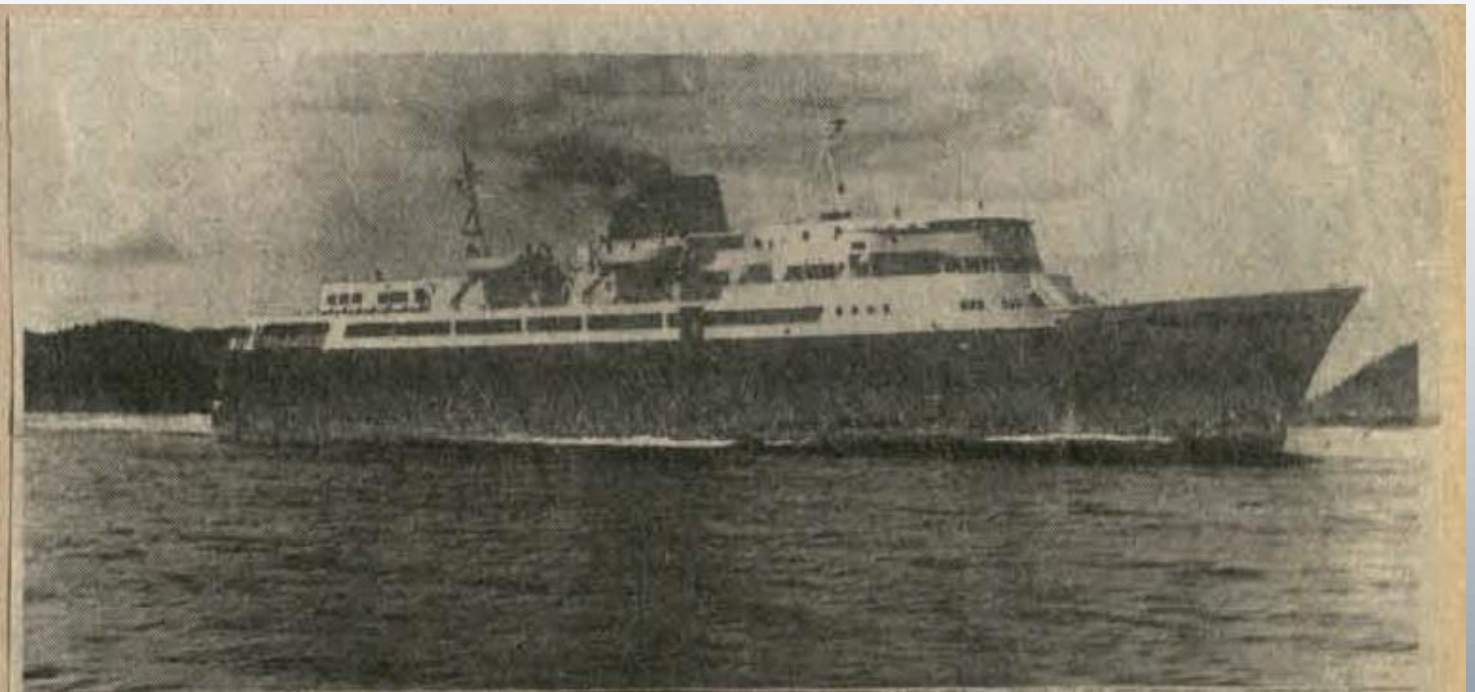
be revised before altering the Chilkat's service. He expects the contracts to be changed by the June 1 availability of the Aurora.

Although residents of Metlakatla have petitioned for some service from the new ferry Aurora as well as home porting the Chilkat at Annette Island, Hudson said he couldn't see how that program could be scheduled.

With the construction plans for the new dock not expected to be considered for another year, the Aurora will be unable to provide any service. Even if the port dock was reconstructed, Hudson said, the cost of serving Metlakatla with the Aurora would be about \$1200 per stop. There is a problem determining the most prosperous runs while still providing adequate levels of service, Hudson said.

ALASKA MARINE HIGHWAY

- 50th ANNIVERSARY -



S-T-R-E-T-C-H — A \$15.2 million contract was awarded to Willamette Iron and Steel Co. in Portland today to stretch the state ferry Matanuska. The work, which will include cutting the vessel in half and adding a new section, is expected to be completed by next June. The company will begin building the stretch section immediately and install it into the Matanuska when it comes out of service October 1. The Portland firm also won the contract to stretch the Malaspina in 1972, a \$10 million job. Marine Transportation officials said Willamette Iron was the lowest of three bidders on the job and bids ranged from \$19 million to the Portland firm's low bid.

ALASKA MARINE HIGHWAY

- 50th ANNIVERSARY -

'Aurora' to make debut

New state ferry named 'Aurora'

JUNEAU — Alaska's new 235 - foot ferry will be named "Aurora," Marine Highway System Director William Hudson has announced.

Hudson says the \$7.6 million ferry should arrive in Alaska in time to begin its scheduled shuttle run between Ketchikan and Prince Rupert early this summer.

Gov. Jay S. Hammond selected "Aurora" from the names of three glaciers submitted to him, rejecting Chickamin and Mendenhall, a spokesman said. All Alaska ferries are named after glaciers.

The Aurora Glacier is located near Glacier Bay in the St. Elias Mountains.

The vessel, which is being built by Peterson Builders of Sturgeon Bay, Wis., currently is about 97 per cent complete, Hudson says.

Juneau Empire

Aurora cruise sold out

Tickets for the first cruise of the ferry vessel Aurora Tuesday have been sold out.

The ship will be in Ketchikan for the mini-cruise Tuesday night before going to Juneau. It will return Oct. 27 for christening ceremonies that will be attended by Bella Hammond, the governor's wife, and other state officials.

The mini-cruise begins at 6 p.m. Tuesday and will last about five hours, according to state officials. Champagne and hors d'oeuvres will be served to a capacity load of 250 passengers. Two hundred tickets were sold locally.

The vessel will be in Ketchikan Wednesday and will travel to Hollis Thursday before heading to Juneau where it will be based for the winter. It will return to Ketchikan once weekly.

Next spring it will be based in Ketchikan and will offer service between here and Prince Rupert, B.C., Hollis, Wrangell, Petersburg and Juneau.

The \$7.5 million ship has been delayed since June when it was scheduled to begin service.

ALASKA MARINE HIGHWAY

- 50th ANNIVERSARY -



The state ferry Aurora is an unusual sight at the end of this boardwalk at Tenakee Springs. The ship, filling in

on the small-town northern Southeast run for its sister ship LeConte, made the first state ferry trip to the

town.

Ferry service comes to Tenakee

Story & photos
By JON MATTHEWS
Log staff writer

A hand reached out across the crowded rail of the flag-decked ferry Aurora and met the waiting grasp of a welcomer braving the edge of the dock.

It was, in no uncertain terms, the start of a new era.

The day — April 30 — marked the beginning of state ferry service for the tiny Chichagof Island community of Tenakee Springs. Nearly 200 persons crowded on the MV Aurora at Juneau for the day-long round trip.

The atmosphere was party-like, but the ferry to others marked just another connection between the rest of the world and the town, up to now an isolated shelter of individualism.

"I suppose it had to come sometime," said one town resident to some ferry-borne visitors.

Passengers strained their eyes on the starboard side of the Aurora long before a point was rounded and

the long, thin line of the town came into view. Crew members tied together decorative flags for the ship and balloons were handed out to those waiting on deck in the light sprinkle.

"Governmentitis" was thoroughly set aside for the day, and pointing hands jumped from the crowd as the town, its dock and a big "welcome" sign were spotted.

Tenakee residents gathered as the ferry drew closer, and after the usual tossing of lines and easing adjustments by men on the bridge, the walk-way was secured.

Tenakee Postmaster Dermott O'Toole looked on as Alaska's first lady, Bella Hammond, cut the traditional ribbon and stepped on the dock.

The visitors streamed off the blue and white ferry with obvious delight at entering a unique world of no hurry.

A long gravel path serves as the main "road" of

Tenakee, and is dotted with colorful and anything-but-alike homes. The path develops into a nature trail at one end of town.

Cupcakes and other baked delights were served to the newcomers, as well as the fresh country music of the Tenakee band, "Ace Boat Building Company."

The hot springs the town is famous for were put on open-house status for the first part of the five-hour stopover, and later some visitors got to try the hot mineral water experience. All reports said "wonderful."

The town bar was, to say the least, packed. Many had time to notice some of the little things that make the community what it is — picturesque wells, hummingbirds flirting with a brightly-painted window feeder, and above all, the feeling that everybody had time to stop and chat about this or that.

ALASKA MARINE HIGHWAY

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Tenakee Springs residents have a welcome sign out as the first state ferry to ever visit the town arrives April 30. The state's first lady, Bella Hammond, cut a ribbon at the end of the walk

ramp after the vessel Aurora docked and was greeted by many Tenakee residents, among them Dermott O'Toole, postmaster.

ALASKA MARINE HIGHWAY

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**Baked goods made by Tenakee Springs residents
await the first ferry visitors to the small town on**

Chichagof Island.

ALASKA MARINE HIGHWAY

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But the sun began to head down and tell-tale signs began to sprout about who could stay and who had to return. At first there was some checking of watches, and then, as the ferry whistle blew, a mass exodus of happy passengers.

The musical boat building company played on the dock as the ferry severed its connection to Tenakee and headed back across the glassy inland waters.

Tenakee Springs is a town long-established in Southeast. Regular mail service to the village began in 1903.



Hudson names 4 ferries for possible maintenance here

By JON MATTHEWS

Daily News Staff Writer

The state ferries Taku, LeConte and Aurora could spend two months each in Ketchikan this winter, says the director of the state ferry system.

In addition, the vessel Chilkat, smallest state ferry, will be maintained completely, including drydocking, someplace in Alaska.

But director Bill Hudson said the decision on what ferries would be maintained where

hasn't been finalized. However, he said \$1 million in ferry maintenance work could be removed from Seattle and done in the state.

Hudson also said no specific decision had been made on what, if anything was going to be done with \$1 million appropriated by the legislature to buy a permanent ferry maintenance site in Ketchikan. Hudson said he didn't see the Sunny Point Cannery — cited by Borough officials as a potential site — as "anything but a liability."

Hudson, however, said part of the \$1 million might be used to buy land to expand the present ferry terminal site. Another \$150,000 has been earmarked for improvements at the terminal, he said.

Gov. Jay Hammond apparently hasn't yet decided whether he will approve or veto the \$1 million approved by the legislature to buy a ferry maintenance site here. Backers of the proposal say the state funds could be tied to another approximate \$1 million for a total

of nearly \$2 million to buy a site.

But Hudson, in an interview with the Daily News Thursday, seemed most interested in expansion of the current ferry terminal location. Hudson was to have met with Gateway Borough Planning Director Ira Winograd on the ferry maintenance issue Thursday, but Winograd couldn't be reached for comment on any progress made.

The ferry system director said he was looking "more to the south than to the north" for which direction to expand the present terminal facilities.

Hudson said ferry officials will be checking with local merchants to see what maintenance supplies and services are available in Ketchikan.

Hudson said specific vessels were being assigned to specific engineers, and that the system was in fact gearing up for some in-state maintenance this coming winter. On March 30, Hudson said as many as five vessels could be worked on in Ketchikan, but no specific promises have apparently ever been made.

Meanwhile, Hudson said it will be "nip and tuck" as to whether

the ferry Matanuska will be ready for its already greatly delayed sailing date of July 18. The ferry has been receiving an overhaul and stretch job in Puget Sound, and originally was supposed to be ready to sail in May.

Officials have been saying that the ferry would be ready on July 18, but Hudson's comment was the first indication that the vessel may not make even that date.

Hudson said once on line, the Matanuska is scheduled to become the "workhorse" of the ferry fleet next winter.

Hudson said he's also looking

into moving Prince Rupert customs facilities from that Canadian location to Ketchikan. New expenses for keeping the customs in Prince Rupert could lead to the move. Northbound ferries departing from Prince Rupert would go through customs here, instead of the old system where Canadian boarding passengers go through customs in Prince Rupert before going aboard ship, Hudson said.

Hudson also said Ketchikan could become the southern terminus for some ferries, with a shuttle ferry running between

Prince Rupert and the First City.

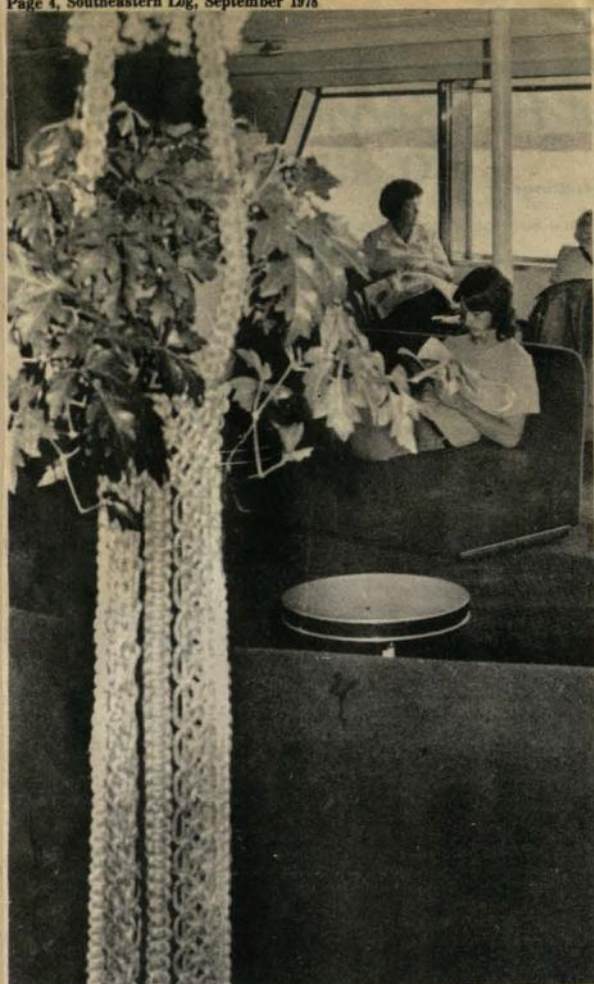
Excessive vibration, which continues to plague the ferry system flagship Columbia, has led the state to seek the help of a company for a study on the problem, Hudson said. Utilizing a model test basin, the company may be able to determine if the ship's propellers could be modified to ease the problem.

The state is still involved in settlement work with the builders of the Columbia over problems that have arisen with the ship, but the issue hasn't yet led to the courts, Hudson said.

ALASKA MARINE HIGHWAY

- 50th ANNIVERSARY -

Page 4, Southeastern Log, September 1978



One of several planters and macrame holders decorate the forward main lounge of the Matanuska.



Meet the new Matanuska

Story & photos
By LOG STAFF

The state ferry Matanuska went back to work with no fanfare in late August after completion of about \$15 million in lengthening and associated remodeling.

The completion was about two months later than expected, and the ship missed most of the tourist season traffic it had been expected to carry. In a March 30, 1978, state Marine Highway System agenda, the ship's lengthening had been expected completed by July 1. It started in November 1977.

The ferry docked Aug. 17, at Ketchikan, its first Alaskan stop, on its first run north after lengthening. The vessel arrived late at the First City and stayed about six hours while repairs were made because of an oil leak in the control box for the pitch propeller.

The nature of the problem was explained by the state Department of Transportation

information officer, Ginger Johnson.

The 56-foot longer vessel is impressive because of the apparent economy sought in the remodeling, many Alaskans aboard at Ketchikan commented. While comfortable, no excessively expensive interior decorating is evident. Joe Upton's photographs decorate wall space in one main, cross-ship passageway and plants hang from the ceiling in the forward lounge, but these are the only really accessory decorations.

The ferry is now 408 feet long, was formerly 352 feet, can carry 750 compared to formerly 500 passengers, and has 256 berths compared to 100 before. It has two elevators, one more than the Columbia, and is the first vessel modified in the state's mainline fleet so it meets Coast Guard and Environmental Pollution Agency wastewater standards for contained sewage systems.



Amidship in the new Matanuska are panels of photographs from Alaska Northwest Publishing Company's

"Alaska Blues: A Fisherman's Journal" by Joe Upton.



A passenger relaxes in a lounge with reclining chairs in the Matanuska, on its first stop at Ketchikan Aug. 17, on its first trip to Southeast since it was lengthened from 352 to 408 feet. Below is

the eating area aboard the vessel. Passengers pick up prepared food from refrigerated cabinets or cafeteria prepared foods in a long hall adjacent to the dining area.



ALASKA MARINE HIGHWAY

- 50th ANNIVERSARY -



A passenger does pushups to keep active during the first voyage north of the Matanuska since the ship was

lengthened. In the lengthening, the vessel gained this solarium. Solariums previously had been on just the

Columbia and Malaspina of ferry system's, four large, mainline ferries.